

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PARIS 36717 01 OF 03 161637Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PARIS 36717

NODIS

DEPARTMENT PASS WHITE HOUSE

FOR THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY FRVM THE AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (CARTER, JIMMY)
SUBJ: YOUR VISIT TO FRANCE

1. YOUR VISIT TO PARIS COMES AT AN UNSETTLED TIME--FOR WESTERN EUROPE IN GENERAL AND FOR FRANCE IN PARTICULAR' AT THE HEART OF EUROPEAN AND FRENCH CONCERNS IS THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC SITUATION, WHICH IS PERCEIVED ON THIS SIDE OF THE ATLANTIC TO BE DETERIORATING. THE FRENCH ARE WORRIED ABOUT PROSPECTS FOR YOUR ENERGY LEGISLATION, ABOUT WHAT THEY SEE AS RISING PROTECTIONISM IN THE US AND ELSEWHERE, AND ABOUT EXCHANGE RATE INSTABILITY. PART OF THEIR GLOOM IS DUE TO AN OBJECTIVE READING OF THE DATA. PART OF IT SEEMS DUE TO THE OLD MYTHS ABOUT THE PRIVILEGED POSITION OF THE DOLLAR, OUR SUPPOSED TRADE ADVANTAGES, AND EXPORTED INFLATION, EVEN THOUGH THE FRENCH REALIZE THAT OUR GOOD GROWTH RATE HELPS FRANCE AND THE WORLD ECONOMY. ANY FRENCH GOVERNMENT WILL BE AMBIVALENT ABOUT APPEARING PUBLICLY TO FOLLOW US LEADERSHIP. BUT THE FRENCH KNOW THAT THE US IS THE BELLWETHER ECONOMY.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 PARIS 36717 01 OF 03 161637Z

2. YOU WILL NEED--IN YOUR CONVERSATIONS WITH GISCARD AND, I URGE ALSO, IN YOUR SPEECH JANUARY 4--TO PROJECT A US ECONOMIC POLICY THAT KNOWS WHERE IT IS GOING, THAT CAN RESIST PROTECTIONIST PRESSURES, AND THAT IS WELL ON THE WAY TOWARD MAJOR ADVANCES ON THE ENERGY FRONT. A CONFIDENT AND POSITIVE EXPOSITION OF YOUR ADMINISTRA-

TION'S ECONOMIC STRATEGY AND COMMITMENT TO INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION WOULD MEASURABLY HELP EUROPEAN ECONOMIC MORALE.

3. THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IN FRANCE--OVER A MILLION UNEMPLOYED AND AN INFLATION RATE OF 9.5 PER CENT--IS ONE REASON WHY THE MAJORITY HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO CAPITALIZE FULLY ON THE THREE-MONTH-OLD RUPTURE IN THE LEFT COALITION. ANOTHER FACTOR IS THE GENERAL FEELING IN FRANCE THAT THE SAME POLITICAL CROWD HAS BEEN TOO LONG--NEARLY 20 YEARS--IN THE LEADERSHIP. THE POLLS SHOW THAT SOME 50 PER CENT OF FRENCH VOTERS STILL WANT A CHANGE. IN ONE IMPORTANT SENSE, HOWEVER, THE LEFT SPLIT HAS BEEN A BOON TO GISCARD. EVEN IF THE SOCIALISTS AND COMMUNISTS GET BACK TOGETHER IN AN ELECTORAL COALITION--STILL A POSSIBILITY--IT SEEMS UNLIKELY AT THIS WRITING THAT THE LEFT WILL EMERGE FROM THE TWO-ROUND MARCH ELECTIONS WITH A MAJORITY OF PARLIAMENTARY SEATS. A HAIRLINE VICTORY FOR THE MAJORITY, HOWEVER, WILL RAISE SERIOUS QUESTIONS ABOUT THE VIABILITY AND LONGEVITY OF THE NEXT FRENCH GOVERNMENT AFTER MARCH.

4. SUCH A PROSPECT MAKES GISCARD'S ROLE ALL THE MORE IMPORTANT. HE IS PRESIDENT UNTIL 1981, AND MUST THEREFORE BE THE MAIN STABILIZING FORCE IN FRANCE.
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 PARIS 36717 01 OF 03 161637Z

HIS HOPE IS TO DOMESTICATE MITTERRAND'S SOCIALIST PARTY--WHICH REMAINS TO THE LEFT OF ITS BRITISH AND GERMAN COUNTERPARTS--BY BRINGING IT INTO A BROAD CENTER-LEFT COALITION WHICH WOULD ISOLATE THE COMMUNISTS AND POSSIBLY THE RIGHT WING OF CHIRAC'S RPR PARTY. SUCH AN OUTCOME WOULD PROBABLY BE IN THE INTEREST OF FRENCH STABILITY, SINCE IT WOULD BRING THE SOCIALIST PARTY INTO THE MAINSTREAM OF MODERATE EUROPEAN SOCIAL DEMOCRACY. BUT I DOUBT THAT IT IS IN THE CARDS IN THE NEAR TERM, BECAUSE OF THE SOCIALISTS' IDEOLOGICAL HANG-UPS; THE FACT THAT THE SOCIALISTS MAY EMERGE FROM THE ELECTIONS IN A STRONG POSITION AS THE LARGEST PARTY IN FRANCE; AND THE NEAR-CERTAIN OPPOSITION OF CHIRAC, WHO CONTROLS THE STRONGEST PARTY IN THE MAJORITY.

5. IN AN ELECTION AS CLOSE AS THIS ONE, YOUR VISIT COULD GIVE GISCARD AND HIS MAJORITY AN ELECTORAL BOOST.

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PAGE 01 PARIS 36717 02 OF 03 161702Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 PARIS 36717

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THAT IS WHAT HE WANTS. BUT HE ALSO WANTS THE OPPOR-
TUNITY TO SIT DOWN WITH YOU FOR AN EXTENDED
DISCUSSION OF THE MAJOR INTERNATIONAL AND BILATERAL
ISSUES. WHILE THE FRENCH HAVE NOT YET WORKED OUT AN
AGENDA, WE EXPECT THEM TO RAISE THE FOLLOWING ISSUES
(IN ADDITION TO THE ECONOMIC ISSUE MENTIONED EARLIER):

A. STRATEGIC ISSUES. GISCARD'S BASIC AIM WILL
BE TO EXPLORE WITH YOU MEDIUM- AND LONG-TERM CONCEP-
TIONS FOR EUROPEAN DEFENSE, INCLUDING EUROPE'S PLACE
IN THE VARIOUS DISARMAMENT NEGOTIATIONS. HE IS
CONCERNED THAT THE SOVIETS AND THE FRG FOR DIFFERENT
REASONS WILL SUCCEED IN MBFR IN LIMITING FRANCE'S
(AND SO EUROPE'S) FREEDOM OF ACTION. GISCARD MAY GIVE
YOU THE FRENCH DECISION ON THEIR PARTICIPATION IN
FOUR-POWER SALT CONSULTATIONS. IT MAY WELL BE NO.
HE IS AFRAID THAT THE US, THROUGH THE FOUR-POWER
TALKS, WILL MAKE EUROPE A JUNIOR PARTNER IN SALT.
THE FRENCH MAY FEAR THAT THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN SUCH
CONSULTATIONS WOULD OVER TIME IMPLICITLY COMMIT THEM
TO ACCEPT LIMITATIONS ON THEIR OWN MODEST NUCLEAR
FORCES. THEY ARE ALSO APPREHENSIVE ABOUT THE FRG'S
CONCERN ABOUT THE "EUROSTRATEGIC" BALANCE AND GERMAN
INTEREST IN CRUISE MISSILES. THEY SEE THE FORMER AS
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PARIS 36717 02 OF 03 161702Z

DECOUPLING THE US FROM ITS DEFENSE OF EUROPE. THE

LATTER MAKES NO SENSE TO THEM AS THE FRG CANNOT HAVE NUCLEAR WARHEADS OF ITS OWN.

B. DISARMAMENT. GISCARD MAY AIR HIS CONCERNS ABOUT A 3-5 YEAR CTB AGREEMENT AS THE FRENCH BELIEVE THEY NEED MORE TIME TO PERFECT THEIR NUCLEAR WEAPONS CURRENTLY UNDERWAY. HE IS LIKELY TO PROBE ON OUR TALKS WITH THE SOVIETS ON THE INDIAN OCEAN AND ON CONVENTIONAL ARMS TRANSFERS. IT WOULD BE USEFUL IF YOU COULD PUT IN A PLUG FOR CLOSE BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS BEFORE THE FRENCH UNVEIL NEXT SPRING THEIR DISARMAMENT PROPOSAL. THEIR BUREAUCRACY HAS YET TO COME UP WITH ANY CONCRETE PROPOSALS.

C. NON-PROLIFERATION. GISCARD HAS COME A LONG WAY TOWARD YOUR POLICY, AND THE PAKISTAN REPROCESSING AGREEMENT IS NOW IN LIMBO. THE FRENCH WILL NOT WANT TO HAVE IT KNOWN BEFORE THEIR ELECTION THAT THEY ARE DRAGGING THEIR FEET (THE NUCLEAR LOBBY IS STRONG HERE). GISCARD IS LIKELY TO LOOK TO YOU TO INSURE THAT THE FRENCH DECISION IS NOT MADE PUBLIC THROUGH EITHER CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFINGS OR LEAKS, WHICH I BELIEVE MIGHT CAUSE THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT, UNDER GAULLIST PRESSURES, TO RECONSIDER ITS DECISION NOT TO GO THROUGH WITH THE DEAL.

D. EAST-WEST. THE FRENCH ARE MUCH MORE COMFORTABLE WITH OUR POLICY NOW THAT SALT IS BACK ON THE RAILS. I DON'T THINK YOU WILL GET ANY CARPING FROM GISCARD OVER HUMAN RIGHTS. HE WILL EXPECT A FULL READ-OUT FROM YOU ON THE CONDITIONS OF AND PROSPECTS FOR US-SOVIET RELATIONS.

E. THE MIDDLE EAST. GISCARD WILL BE PRINCIPALLY INTERESTED IN HEARING YOUR VIEWS AND OBTAINING THE LATEST INFORMATION ON PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. THE
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PAGE 03 PARIS 36717 02 OF 03 161702Z

FRENCH FEEL THAT THEY HAVE AS GREAT A STAKE AS ANYONE IN MIDDLE EAST PEACE BUT, FOR ALL THEIR GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE ARABS, DO NOT FEEL THAT THEY HAVE MUCH LEVERAGE ON THE SITUATION. THEY HAVE COME AROUND TO LUKEWARM SUPPORT OF THE SADAT INITIATIVES, BUT THEY ARE FEARFUL THAT WITHOUT RESULTS THE MIDDLE EAST COULD RAPIDLY HEAD INTO A NEW PERIOD OF DANGEROUS INSTABILITY. THEY BELIEVE THAT A SEPARATE ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN SETTLEMENT CANNOT WORK BECAUSE OF ITS DIVISIVE EFFECT ON THE ARAB WORLD.

AFRICA. THE FRENCH WOULD LIKE US TO PROVIDE MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA FOR USE IN WESTERN SAHARA. THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT IS STILL TILTING HEAVILY TOWARD MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA, THOUGH IT IS COMING UNDER INCREASED CRITICISMS FROM THE LEFT AND FROM SOME GAULLISTS FOR LETTING RELATIONS WITH

ALGERIA WORSEN. THE PROMISED RELEASE OF FRENCH HOSTAGES MIGHT ALLOW PARIS TO BEGIN MENDING FENCES WITH ALGIERS. IN ANY CASE, I BELIEVE WE SHOULD BE LEERY OF ARMS REQUESTS WHICH WOULD EMBROIL US IN THE WESTERN SAHARA. GISCARD MAY ALSO SEEK YOUR VIEWS ON THE ETHIOPIA-SOMALIA AND SOUTHERN AFRICA ISSUES.

6. DESPITE THE FRENCH CONCERNS NOTED, OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP IS SOUND. THERE IS RELIEF THAT CONCORDE OPERATIONS AT NEW YORK HAVE GONE SMOOTHLY, BUT SERIOUS CONCERN ABOUT THE POLITICAL FALL-OUT FROM THE LATEST PORT AUTHORITY ACTION WHICH WOULD BAN

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PAGE 01 PARIS 36717 03 OF 03 161647Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 PARIS 36717

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CONCORDE FROM 1985. ON ISSUES LIKE NATV COOPETION AND NON-PROLIFERATION, GISCARD HAS MOVED HIS GOVERNMENT CLOSER TO THE US POSITION, ALTHOUGH IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT WE NOT MENTION THIS FACT PUBLICLY, THE KNEE-JERK ANTI-AMERICANISM OF GAULLIST DAYS IS GONE AT THE UPPER LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT. INDEED, IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT GISCARD CONSIDERS IT IN HIS INTEREST TO DISPLAY THE FRANCO-AMERICAN CONNECTION ON THE THRESHOLD OF AN ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN. THE JOR OVERALL FRENCH CONCERN WITH US POLICY IS THAT--THOUGH THEY UNDERSTAND THAT SOME ISSUES WON'T WAIT--WE MAY BE TACKLING TOO MUCH AT ONCE. I THINK YOU SHOULD BE PREPARED TO SET OUT FOR GISCARD YOUR RELATIVE PRIORITIES AMONG SUCH ISSUES AS ENERGY, TRADE, SALT,

HUMAN RIGHTS, DETENTE, AND THE MIDDLE EAST.

7. FINALLY, THERE IS THE PROBLEM OF MITTERRAND' IF A MEETING TAKES PLACE, MITTERRAND WILL SEEK TO REASSURE YOU THAT IN A LEFT GOVERNMENT HE CAN HANDLE THE COMMUNISTS--WHOM, FOR ELECTORAL REASONS, HE IS STILL COURTING--AND THAT THERE IS THEREFORE LITTLE FOR THE US TO FEAR. HE WILL ALSO ARGUE THAT IF THE COMMUNISTS DO NOT AGREE TO SOCIALIST POSITIONS ON CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PARIS 36717 03 OF 03 161647Z

ESSENTIAL ISSUES, THE SOCIALISTS HAVE THE ALTERNATIVE OF FORMING A MINORITY GOVERNMENT BY THEMSELVES. WHILE IT WILL, OF COURSE, BE NECESSARY TO MAKE CLEAR THAT THE US IS PREPARED TO WORK WITH ANY DEMOCRATIC FRENCH GOVERNMENT, I SUGGEST YOU ALSO LEAVE WITH HIM YOUR CONCERNS. MOST IMPORTANT, WE REMAIN DEEPLY SUSPICIOUS ABOUT THE MOTIVES AND RELIABILITY OF THE FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY; NOTHING IN THAT PARTY'S HISTORY OR MAKE-UP GIVES US ANY REASON TO FEEL IT WOULD BE A COOPERATIVE PARTNER IN THE COMMON TASKS OF WESTERN DEMOCRACIES. SECONDLY, WHILE WE VALUE A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOCIALIST PARTY, WE ALSO HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT SOCIALIST POLICY. FOR EXAMPLE, WE ARE TROUBLED BY THE POSSIBLE INFLATIONARY EFFECTS OF ITS ECONOMIC PRESCRIPTIONS AS WELL AS BY THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR FRANCE'S ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH THE US AND WITH ITS EC PARTNERS. MOREOVER, WHILE MITTERRAND SUPPORTS THE WESTERN ALLIANCE AND THE PRINCIPLE OF DISARMAMENT, HIS ATTACHMENT TO NATO SEEMS TO US MUCH WEAKER THAN THAT OF THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT AND HIS SPECIFIC DISARMAMENT PROPOSALS (E.G., FOR A CSCE TO INCLUDE NUCLEAR AND CONVENTIONAL FORCES IN EUROPE) SEEM SIMPLISTIC AT BEST AND UNWORK-ABLE AT WORST. HARTMAN

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